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Press Release
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FOREIGN MINISTERS OF INDONESIA AND PORTUGAL CONCLUDE TWO-DAY MEETING ON EAST TIMOR QUESTION

Meetings, Held at United Nations Headquarters, "Took Place in an Open, Cordial, Constructive Atmosphere", Communique States

The following communique was issued today by the Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General:

"On 4 and 5 August 1998, the Secretary-General held meetings in New York on the question of East Timor with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and Portugal, Mr. Ali Alatas and Mr. Jaime Gama.

"The meetings took place in an open, cordial and constructive atmosphere. The following points emerged from the two-day talks:

"-- The Ministers agreed to hold in-depth discussions on Indonesia's proposals for a special status, based on a wide-ranging autonomy, for East Timor without prejudice to their basic positions of principle. For this purpose, they have requested their senior officials to intensify their discussions under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General's Personal Representative and to report to the Ministerial meeting at an early date. It is hoped that an agreement could be reached on this issue before the end of the year. "-- The Ministers agreed to involve the East Timorese more closely in the search for a solution. In this connection, they welcomed the Secretary- General's intention to intensify his consultations with East Timorese representatives in East Timor and outside, individually or in groups, in order to take into account their views and to keep them abreast of developments in the tripartite talks. "-- The Ministers also discussed other aspects of the East Timor issue. They took note of the recent positive developments in Indonesia with respect to the question of East Timor, in particular the Indonesian Government's intention to further gradually reduce the level of its military presence in East Timor and to expedite the release of the East Timorese political prisoners. They agreed to continue consideration of these and other related aspects of the East Timor question.

"-- The Ministers agreed that the All-inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue (AIETD) should resume by October 1998.

"-- The Ministers agreed to establish interest sections in friendly embassies in each other's capitals by the end of 1998 and to relax their visa policies towards each other's nationals.

"The next Senior Officials' Meeting of the two sides under the chairmanship of the Personal

Representative of the Secretary-General will take place in New York by the end of September 1998."

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